

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 629

NOFORN

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, CH, US

SUBJECT: REFERENCE NEWS CARRIES LUTTWAG ARTICLE ON CHINA'S "DELIBERATE

DECEPTION" OF FOREIGN VISITORS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CHINA'S LIMITED-CIRCULATION DAILY REFERENCE NEWS PRINTED EXTENSIVE EXCERPTS FROM EDWARD LUTTWAG'S ACIDULOUS ESSAY ON PRC STATE-MANAGING OF FOREIGN DELEGATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE PAPER EXCISED LUTTWAG'S AD HOMINEM ATTACKS ON VARIOUS PRC OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH LAST YEAR'S VISIT BY JAMES SCHLESINGER, IT CARRIED NEARLY VERBATIM LUTTWAG'S CHARGES THAT FOREIGN JOURNALISTS HAD SEEN (OR REPORTED) CHINA THROUGH ROSE-TINTED GLASSES, THAT CHINA IS "ALMOST COMPLETELY WITHOUT FREEDOM," AND THAT THE COUNTRY IS CHARACTERIZED BY POVERTY, TOTALITARIANISM, AND MANIFEST INEQUALITIES IN LIVING STANDARD. ALONG WITH LUTTWAG'S ARTICLE, REFERENCE NEWS PRINTS A REBUTTAL AUTHORED BY FRANK CHIN IN THE ASIAN WALL
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STREET JOURNAL. INTERESTINGLY, CHIN FAULTS LUTTWAG ON A FEW ERRORS OF FACT BUT OTHERWISE ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUBSTANCE OF LUTTWAG'S CHARGES ABOUT POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND THE MONOLITHIC SOCIETY. WHY REFERENCE NEWS SHOULD WISH TO AIR THIS "DEBATE" FOR A READERSHIP OF SOME 10 MILLION IS A MYSTERY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FEBRUARY 15 REFERENCE NEWS (TSAN-KAO HSIAO-HSI) PRINTS, UNDER THE HEADLINE "CHINA: GIVING PEOPLE A FALSE IMPRESSION," EXTENSIVE EXCERPTS FROM EDWARD LUTTWAG'S ACIDULOUS ESSAY ON CHINESE STAGE-MANAGING OF THE SCHLESINGER DELEGATION'S TRIP TO CHINA LAST SEPTEMBER. PASSING UP THE OPPORTUNITY LAST AUTUMN TO PRINT EXCERPTS FROM THE ARTICLE AS IT ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN COMMENTARY AND THE WASHINGTON POST, REFERENCE NEWS TRANSLATED THE VERSION PUBLISHED JANUARY 24 IN THE ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL (AWSJ). THE AWSJ HAD PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING DAY A REBUTTAL BY FRANK CHIN, ALSO CARRIED IN THE FEBRUARY 15 REFERENCE NEWS ALONG WITH THE LUTTWAG PIECE UNDER THE TIELE "CONCERNING CHINA AND REPORTING ON CHINA." BY RUNNING THE TWO ARTICLES TOGETHER, REFERENCE NEWS MANAGES TO AIR THE CHARGES AND TO REBUTE THEM--TO A DEGREE--THROUGH A PRESUMABLY NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION.

3. ALTHOUGH REFERENCE NEWS EXCISED MANY OF LUTTWAG'S MORE TELLING POINTS, AS WELL AS HIS BITING AD HOMINEM ATTACKS ON FOREIGN MINISTRY US DESK DIRECTOR TING YUAN-HUNG, IT CARRIED NEARLY VERBATIM LUTTWAG'S CHARGES THAT:

--FOREIGN SCHOLARS AND JOURNALISTS, NOTABLY JAMES RESTON AND JOHN GALBRAITH, HAD SEEN (OR AT LEAST REPORTED) CHINA THROUGH ROSE-TINTED GLASSES;

--FOREIGNERS ARE DELIBERATELY INSULATED FROM THE CONFIDENTIAL

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REAL CHINA AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE;

--CHINA IS A TOTALITARIAN COUNTRY "ALMOST COMPLETELY WITHOUT FREEDOM"; AND

--CHINA'S REPUTED SOCIAL EQUALITY IS FRAUDULENT, WITH "HIGH PARTY OFFICIALS" SPORTING TAILORED SUITS AND A CONSPICUOUSLY HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING.

4. FRANK CHIN'S REBUTTAL CHARACTERIZES LUTTWAG'S ARTICLE AS SUPERFICIAL, CHILDISH, AND CONTAINING NOTHING NEW. BUT WHILE CHIN CASTIGATES LUTTWAG FOR VARIOUS ERRORS OF FACT--ALL FAR FROM CENTRAL TO HIS THESIS--HE LETS STAND THE THRUST OF LUTTWAG'S CHARGES AND INDEED UNDERSCORES THEM. CHIN ARGUES THAT:

--CHINA'S POVERTY AND DEVELOPING COUNTRY STATUS ARE WELL KNOWN;

--MAO HIMSELF POINTED OUT AND CRITICIZED CONTINUING
SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN CHINA; AND

-CHINA'S MONOLITHIC SOCIETY IS BY INTENT, A REFLEC-
TION OF A NATION CONSTITUTIONALLY GOVERNED BY PROLE-
TARIAN DICTATORSHIP.

AS FOR CHINA'S ALLEGED TOTALITARIANISM, CHIN RESPONDS
THAT LUTTWAG IS GUILTY OF "OVERPRAISE," IGNORING THE
EVIDENCE OF HIS OWN EYES THAT THERE IS A "SPLIT
WITHIN THE PARTY" AND "GENERATIONAL CONFLICT."
MOREOVER, WERE THE IDEAL TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY TRULY
IN EXISTENCE, CHIN NOTES, THERE WOULD BE NO NEED
FOR CHINA'S PROPAGANDA APPARATUS TO ORDER REPEATEDLY
THAT BLACK MARKETS, CORRUPTION, AND ARMED STRUGGLE
MUST CEASE.

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5. WHY REFERENCE NEWS SHOULD WISH TO AIR THIS "DEBATE"
FOR A READERSHIP OF SOME 10 MILLION CADRES IS A MYSTERY.
THERE SEEMS NO INTENT TO ALTER TRADITIONAL
WAYS OF HANDLING FOREIGN VISITORS; THIS ASPECT OF
LUTTWAG'S CRITIQUE IS NOT ADDRESSED BY REFERENCE
NEWS' SURROGATE FRANK CHIN. THE MOTIVE MIGHT BE
TO ENCOURAGE INTERNAL DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN ASPECTS
OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE SOCIETY--ESPECIALLY THOSE
CONTRADICTIONS SO EVIDENT THAT EVEN A "SUPERFICIAL
AND CHILDISH" FOREIGN OBSERVER PICKS THEM UP.
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